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ABSTRACT

A discussion between the leaders of four teacher centers is presented. Participants came from Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, and Burlington (Wisconsin). The Detroit and Philadelphia centers are school-district supported, serving teachers in multiracial, low-income schools throughout the cities. The Chicago and Burlington centers are independent, founded and supported by teachers with financial help from local foundations and businesses. Both depend extensively on volunteers as staff and serve teachers in nonpublic as well as public schools. The conversation between these different center leaders suggests the differences in facilities, formats, scope, and programming, and the similarity of purposes they share. (JD)

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Commonality and Diversity in Four Teachers' Centers–

Conversation at Chautauqua

In August 1977 four leaders of American teachers' centers explained their work to a Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Education representative during an informal conversation at Lake Chautauqua, New York. All were participating in a week-long seminar on teacher centers during Education Week at Chautauqua, organized by Allen Schmieder, chief, Teacher Centers' Program, United States Office of Education. The conversation was recorded and edited by the Teachers' Centers Exchange. The portions of the conversation which follow suggest the differences in facilities, formats, scope, and programming, and the similarity of purposes among the four centers—and indeed among all centers in the network of teachers' centers served by the Exchange.

The participants in the conversation were Edith Klausner, director, Philadelphia Advisory Center for the Improvement of Education; Theresa Lorio, assistant director, Detroit Center for Professional Growth and Development; David Messerschmidt, Chicago elementary school teacher and member of the board of directors of the Teacher Curriculum Work Center; and Judith Schulz, director, Burlington (Wisconsin) Teacher Place. The questioner was Katherine Farquhar, curriculum and instruction team leader for the Massachusetts Department of Education.

The Detroit and Philadelphia Centers are school-district supported facilities serving teachers in multiracial, low-income schools throughout the cities. The Chicago and Burlington Centers are independent, founded and supported by teachers with financial help from local foundations and businesses. Both depend extensively (Burlington entirely) on volunteers as staff, and both serve teachers in nonpublic as well as public schools. The Chicago Center is located on the Southside and serves teachers in multiracial schools. The Burlington Center is located in a small town near Milwaukee and draws teachers from suburban and rural middle-class communities in three counties.

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Commonality and Diversity in Four Teachers' Centers

Continued from page 1

Katherine: *Let's begin with the question: What's the reason for your existence?*

Edie (Philadelphia): We're there to help teachers do the things they want to do right away—whether it's to obtain material for the classroom, or to make something, or to have a discussion with other people. We fill the gaps that are left by standard inservice or university courses, and we allow teachers to make their own choices about what they need to do for their own professional growth.

Theresa (Detroit): Teachers were concerned that they didn't have a say about the kinds of inservice they were receiving, and if they did make a request for inservice there was a lot of red tape. It took several months before their requests would be delivered, and when you looked at the outcome it generally was the standard inservice that had been put upon them in the past. Teachers needed a place where they could go voluntarily, where they could go with confidentiality and open up to someone. We think the Center's a place where we've built up trust, and that's one thing that keeps us going. There are five major organizations in the consortium which runs the Center: the Detroit Organization of School Administrators and Supervisors, the Wayne County Intermediate School District, the Detroit Public Schools, Wayne State University College of Education, and the Detroit Federation of Teachers.

David (Chicago): The Center in Chicago is rooted in a concern that change for children in classrooms will only come about through the professional growth of teachers. A small group of people organized a space in the basement of a local school; from this, the Center grew to become a regular facility in the local YMCA.

Katherine: *It might be helpful if people could comment on what the situation was before their teachers' center came into existence, with respect to professional growth opportunities for teachers, and how that's changed because of the teachers' center.*

Edie: There's a difference not only in the way that teachers' needs are expressed and how the Center responds, but in the very content and operation of, let's say, a given workshop or series. At a teachers' center, the way a workshop is prepared for by the workshop leader and the way that it is followed up are quite different from standard inservice. Philadelphia offers a lot of good inservice. The district does ask teachers what they want; they schedule lots of courses; they put out a program every semester, fall and spring, of what teachers can take and get credit for. The district really has quite a number of good offerings, but these are structured in a very standardized way. That is, a lecturer is engaged to teach a course on Reading in the Open Classroom, or Metric Math, or a topic like that. Then the lecturer prepares ten two-hour sessions—which can be of very high quality and valuable if presented to teachers who *want* to be there—but it's the standard lecture/audience format.

In contrast, at the Center we have a variety of formats, and we are always open-ended. When I get ready to do a workshop I gather together about 18 possible topics. I know what I am going to say for the first five minutes, but then I'm ready to work with whichever of those 18 topics the teachers who are there respond to. I'm not threatened if the workshop doesn't come out as Plan A. It might be Plan B or C or another plan that evolves during the session. Also, I know those people are going to come back . . . it's not the only time that I am going to see them, but I'm not going to have to cover eight other lessons in the sessions when they come back. There's a whole lot of give-and-take within the content of what goes on, and the planning for

what goes on, and then the informal follow-up. It's really very interesting . . . people don't have to come back, you know. You do your first session of a three-part series of workshops, knowing they're not going to come back to Number Two and Number Three unless they really feel that you met their needs. So you have to be flexible and keep on your toes—I think that goes on in all the Centers—and it's a real difference.

David: The thing that always stands out for me is the memory of a principal calling the faculty together for an inservice day. Everybody was lined up in rows, and he delivered a speech on how to individualize instruction. The formats developed by school administrators always seem to be caught in those contradictions. What they talk about teachers doing with children they are unable to do in their courses for teachers. Although they talk about the necessity of developing small groups with children somehow they don't manage to do that with teachers. Or if they talk about building on children's interests, they don't see how that might actually be done with teachers. The real difference is that teachers' centers have been able to say: "Look, teachers are learners and want to be learners, and as learners there are a variety of ways that we need to work with them."

Judith (Burlington): In a center we can also back up. Today you learned how to do one new thing in metric math, but tomorrow in your classroom something doesn't work right. Well, you have to wait until the next inservice to get the answer, and by then, who cares? In contrast, at the Teacher Place you can deal with your needs immediately, or at the point when you need to figure out how come a method's not working—maybe you forgot Instruction One. You can go back to the Center and get the rules.

Katherine: *What do people do when they first come to your Center?*

Judith: Well, we have food, and they can browse. When I give a tour to newcomers I explain the parts as being like an ongoing mini-convention. There's curriculum materials to examine or try out—"play this math game and see if it works." They come to find ideas a lot—they want to find something that will excite them, that will motivate their students. I think if teachers go into the classroom enthusiastic they will be a lot more successful with the kids. They come to do things that are not at all the lofty idealism that we expect in dedicated teachers, but to do something very basic and concrete. They come to use the laminator or to find a book. They come because they need a spinner, and where else can they buy spinners except at the Teacher Place? Once they come they start talking to each other: "You mean you are a fifth-grade teacher? Oh my gosh, did you ever try this in science class?" They begin to discuss and connect up, and get personal support. One woman said, "I get so *up* about teaching every time I'm in here." Well, that's what we're there for.

David: I think of the teachers' center as an effective classroom. The other thing that we do very quickly is connect teachers with other teachers. It's very rare that one of the staff members will show someone how to use the laminating machine or the duplicator. We always try to get another teacher to do it, who is already working with the equipment. So immediately the teachers make connections. This is something that you would do in the classroom if you really wanted children to be able to learn when the teacher is not available.

Judith: That's something we try to do. I think most centers, ours particularly, try to be living examples of things you can do with kids. We try to make sure that peer teaching occurs.

Theresa: We have a reading lab and a math lab where there are materials to examine that can also be taken out on loan; people can come in and browse. But we really don't have a

make-and-take-it operation, although we do give some workshops structured that way. We have a professional library and examples of curriculum materials. We have computer terminals. We have a host of mathematics materials that are there for people to work with. We have audiovisual materials, television tapes, audio recorders. We have taped many of our presentations and workshops so that if someone happens to miss Dorsey Hammond doing her fantastic thing with Reading in the Content Area they can go over in the corner and replay the videotape, and still be part of that workshop.

People who come to the Center are coming basically to structure their own inservice. They come with a specific problem. They come in to meet with one of our inservice specialists or with the reading or math specialists. Or they come in for a workshop that we've advertised city-wide. We're one of those places that are both a function and a place. I say we're a function because we move out and go where teachers are, because that's where they need the help. We're pleased when we can go into a building where a group of teachers want some inservice, because they can always run back to their classroom and pick up the materials they need to really make the inservice individual for them.

Edie: I would say the largest number of people who come to our Center the first time come to make something. We have a well-equipped shop run by a talented person who is very creative in helping people use triwall cardboard and lumber to build storage, furniture, and visual aids for the classroom. He prefabs a fair amount so that within a reasonable length of time you can make something of value. At the same time you get the experience of doing an activity you may have never done before—using an electric power tool or fitting something together with the joints dovetailing properly. Very often that puts you in the same position as children in classrooms who are trying to do something for the first time . . . trying to learn to read or write or figure something out. You really find out how the kids feel when they goof something and want to throw it away or erase it. Teachers get uptight about the kids doing that.

The other thing that brings people into our Center is if somebody in their school has been there. They are the most enthusiastic proselytizers. We get people coming in the door and saying, "You know, Nancy Jones from our school comes here all the time and she said I should come, so here I am." You wonder what they have in mind, but they soon tell you; they are drawn to the physical things first—things to look at, handle, crafts, making learning materials. The next spinoff that happens is they connect up with one another and with groups of people. They want to be with other teachers to talk over problems, and they want to feel they can include the Center staff in those conversations on a collegial level. I think that the staff in our Center always feels very much that this is teacher-to-teacher talk. Sometimes new people want to cast you as an expert, but our staff tries very definitely not to accept that role. I think everybody's suggestion is valid and valuable, and we attempt to have that kind of exchange.

We have also formed teachers' study groups over the last three or four years. These take time to start and develop. Teachers meet over time to reflect together on how children in their classrooms are learning and better ways that they can observe classroom interaction. This is a level of activity that goes on simultaneously with the physical activities in the Center. It isn't a matter of stages—"Oh, now we're into thoughtful or intellectual or cerebral activities"—but simply that another deep level is growing and building, at the same time as those very same people are engaged in more hands-on types of activities. I think that people come for skills at all times, but they also come because it builds confidence to select materials, decide what you are going to do with the class, and have someone around who says, "Yes, that might really work," or "So-and-So tried that," or "You've done a really good thing."

The National Institute of Education
U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare
Washington, D.C. 20208

The Teachers' Centers Exchange, located at the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, 1855 Folsom Street, San Francisco, California 94103 (415-565-3097 or 565-3101), is supported by the National Institute of Education.

Katherine: *An issue that people have brought up but not dealt with directly is the characteristics of the core staff of a teachers' center. What kind of people do you need?*

Judith: We're staffed by anybody who volunteers to help staff the place and, surprisingly, they're the kind of people who, if we had money, we'd probably hire. They're people who are very much concerned about growing and learning. They're always looking for new ways of thinking about what they're teaching now, and ways to maintain a successful unit through repeated use in their classroom. They're very interested in talking to teachers and parents. They want to share ideas that they think might be valuable to others: "Oh, do you have that same problem with your kids?" Or, "Boy, this book tells exactly how to deal with that kind of question." So they really want to work with people. Also, I think they are very concerned about education as a whole—not just a single classroom and what happens today—and they want to be effective teachers. They have to be very flexible people. They have to go from stuffing something into a box or sorting recycle materials to dealing with teachers coming in that just don't know how they are going to teach tomorrow because they've had such a rotten day.

Katherine: *Theresa, your Center has inservice specialists who work in four different schools. What kinds of things do you look for in those people?*

Theresa: I guess it's looking at who they are that is important. We have a field consultant service person, who is resource oriented. She is able to talk to people, get them to open up, really get at basic needs. She can ask, "What is it that you really need? Do you know what the consequences are if you go this way?" So that's her role. Our staff who are inservice specialists are master teachers. They changed not only their classrooms but were influential in changing their buildings. They came to us with those kinds of recommendations.

Everyone on our staff is a teacher except the director, who has been a high school teacher, an administrator, and also superintendent of one of our regions. I'm a fifth-grade classroom teacher. I was involved in the Neighborhood Education Center, a federally funded project that dealt with individualized instruction written by teachers. We wrote the program, wrote the management system, lived and died through the birth and death of that program and continued to keep it alive as long as we possibly could, believing in those kinds of things and looking for a place where teachers might have those same kinds of experiences.

One of our inservice specialists took on two schools, which was a tremendous effort for her. She worked with an elementary school in the morning and a middle school in the afternoon. Because she was a resourceful person—she was one of those humanists that knew how to get people to open up, how to share—she helped to develop in that middle school groups of teachers working together . . . teaming together, which has become a very successful program. The other inservice specialist in the middle school has always been into gaming and individualization of instruction, and that's what she's helped to promote. The staff in that school, too, have begun to look at her as somebody pretty super, but what she's also done is to make them feel that they are pretty super. We have developed in those two schools teachers and administrators who now serve as consultants for us—there's a kind of "catching fire" from people who are so vital. Our reading and math people are university personnel who have had elementary and high school experience, so they remember what it's like to be in a classroom.

David: Each staff person is a good teacher of adults as well as children, and able to make other people feel good about themselves and about their work. Added to that is their concern for the environment and space they work in and the effect those things have on people. The staff is interested in helping teachers develop relationships with peers. Often staff members have specialties—a single area of expertise or several areas that they can assist teachers with. The last thing is that there's always a real

concern for children . . . they're comfortable working directly with children. The staff aren't directly involved in classrooms now, but their *concerns* are there. They're excited about the process of working with adults, but they do it in a context of a concern for children.

Edie: There isn't anybody on our staff, including myself, who came on full-time, first day, as a full-fledged teachers' center staff person—everybody filters in gradually through the edges. We try very hard to keep a fair portion of our budget in the category of "consultant" so we're not having to make work for people. If we need someone to lead a particular workshop, we can get that person—we feel free to pull in different people from the community to do different things. The other quality I think is different about teacher centers' staff is that they have a certain humility, a certain interest in being a learner—*really* being a learner alongside of the people they're working with—and not feeling the expert. I always learned from children I taught, and I always feel now that I learn from the teachers I work with. I think that really is a difference—there isn't that need to be the expert. An openness has to be there and a way of being able to say to the rest of the staff, "Look, I'm thinking about doing these things for a workshop, but do you have any other ideas or do you know anyone else that I should call in about this? . . . Do you know of any other materials?" You don't have any territory to protect.

Katherine: *We've been talking a lot about what goes on inside the center. What criteria do you use to evaluate your Center?*

Edie: We have been very fortunate. Once the school district awards us a contract to work for a given year, they accept whatever reporting we choose to do. They have never said, "You have to give us such and such figures," so we've been able to write rather descriptive reports which include some statements about numbers of people, period of operation, and of course budget. But we've also been able to work by questioning one another as a staff and questioning some of our core constituency—having dialogue about what they see as a value, how they see either changes or support.

What we're coming to, and I hope we can get enough resources together to do, is some in-depth interviewing of teachers. We make a big point of talking to the people who use our Center and bringing their feedback to the staff. We structure a time for this to happen during our monthly staff meeting.

David: What we are trying to do is document our work, preserving examples of all the different publications we put out and curriculum materials that teachers write. We ask participants to evaluate each workshop that's given. One thing we're also trying to do is reflect on the Center over time. We have existed now for six years, and one measure of success is the fact that the original people who set up the Center have left and moved to different parts of the country. The Center has essentially been handed over to a group of people who first used it as a base for their own teaching, for their development as teachers. So we see a transfer of the Center, which I think is a pretty good measure of how effective an organization is in keeping itself alive and growing.

Judith: It seems to me that whenever we talk about evaluation, it ends up that we're trying to justify to someone else what we're doing so that we get money. I don't think we're old enough to know if we can justify the Center to other people. We more than justify our existence to ourselves because of the people who use the Center . . . because of the growth that is provided for us. I know that it's still working for me, and new people get involved all the time—it's growing that way. People's comments are the trophies we collect along the way—like the woman who said, "I feel so *up* about teaching every time I leave here."

Business people have been astounded that a group of classroom teachers could go

out and do something that has no logic of business at all, and succeed and keep growing . . . double the space . . . those kinds of things.

One woman said one day, "How do you become a staff person here?" I said, "We're all volunteers, but if you would like to, whatever time you can give." She said, "Oh, I'd love it." So we had a staff-training meeting, and ten people, eleven including myself, were at the meeting. If they had said anything too nice I would have cried . . . I was so touched. We had reached a real milestone, where all of the work of the original committee was justified. All of a sudden there were that many other people committed to the Center. I think that's a good evaluation too—almost all of those people were classroom teachers or parents.

We started out in a small space about 900 square feet—three little rooms with a sink. But people could not work comfortably in it. On the evaluations after all of our workshops people were writing, "We need more space to work . . . it's too crowded." I knew that, but coming from all of them, there was our evaluation: "We need more space." We have 2,000 square feet now, and we signed a 13-month lease last month.

Theresa: Because we're state funded and have a formal evaluation plan, we have "areas of impact" or, as we call them, "categories of impact." The first one really is to *become known*. With 350 schools in the system it really took a lot to become known, and of course we're still not known in every school. We also said that we would look at the *school climate* in our demonstration schools—keep track of what we felt the climate was when we came in and note the changes after our work with teachers, students, parents, and administration. Then we were going to look at *teachers' behavior*. Teachers feel that they have made some change in what they now do as a result of the teachers' center. Finally, as far down the line as is possible, we will probably have to look at *student performance* and whether that can be attributed to the impact of the Center. We've been talking to evaluators from around the country, and they're saying that there is no "clean model" that you can do that with. We evaluate every one of our workshops, and teachers tell us what they feel happened to them . . . what they think they can do with what they learned. We also give teachers a letter about follow-up which says, "Would you be willing to answer a questionnaire in a couple of weeks about what's still happening as a result of this workshop? Would you be willing to have one of our staff members or the consultant come in and observe your classroom when you're doing whatever you say you learned from this workshop? Or would you like us to come in and give you a further demonstration?" One step further, what we found to really be successful is, "Would you be willing to share with us some of the lesson plans and work that you've created as a result of this workshop, or would you send us some of your students' work?" Every year we make those kinds of requests. We say, "If you send it in by this date, it will be on display during our open house." It's amazing the number and kinds of things that come. In the formal evaluation plan each of the Center components has written a whole span of objectives that staff hope to accomplish, and everyone has created a PERT chart, and we turn them in. Are we getting there? Are we going where we want to go? This may be a higher level of sophistication than we ought to be looking at at this time, but it's good for us because we're learning. We're beginning to learn how to write realistic goals, and I think that's probably the key.

Katherine: *Are the facilities and materials at your teachers' center free, or do you charge?*

Edie: I feel really strongly about teachers' time being the contribution that teachers are making. When a teacher comes to a center after school or on a Saturday, that is a contribution of time and, in a way, of money, because that teacher could be taking another job at that time or might be hiring a baby-sitter. I really resent the idea that a teacher should be expected to pay for a membership or pay for materials. I will push the school district or foundations before I will ask teachers to pay.

Judith: Our Center is free to use. You have to pay for some of the materials that you might use, but you can bring your own in. You can come here all day and make stuff and never spend any money. Now people generally pay for the workshops. I think there is a point about people, particularly teachers—they don't think about their time as valuable. They have not been treated as if their time is extremely valuable. So we believe people make a better conscious decision about materials that they are going to take if they have to plunk down something for them. People that pay for workshops, we find, take a lot more, or they become more involved in the workshop, or they come back and tell us how it was useful. Somehow when things are free, they are valued less.

David: We charge a voluntary membership fee of $15 a year. The situation is that anybody can come in and use the Center and pay only for the cost of the materials they use. We have free felt-tip markers; they can use scissors and paste and all sorts of stuff. I would agree with Edie that it would be good if the Center could be provided by the school system, and I think it should be, but we're in a situation where that's not the case. To survive we need support from participants buying annual memberships and paying fees for workshops. We also sell classroom materials and books in our book store. An independent center just has to find sources of revenue to continue to exist.

Theresa: Our Center doesn't sell memberships because we're in the Detroit system.

Katherine: *Can you characterize the relationship between your teachers' center and the administrative structure?*

Theresa: As we've gotten into the business of teacher-centering we see that we need to collaborate with many other programs in the district, because there are federal programs that all require inservice training: career education, ESEA, bilingual, and others. People are concerned about their territory or their training. We work in concert with them. We plan some inservices together. For example, in Region 7 we work with all of the kindergarten teachers. They've spent the whole summer, all day long in our Center on their own time writing objectives, creating materials, creating lesson plans. Now they're going to start a whole new kindergarten program in Region 7. We're working with each region in Detroit collaboratively so that we're not spinning wheels, not duplicating services, and so our services are geared to what people really want.

David: Our relationships with administrators have been good along the way. Now we are being much more deliberate about it. I think we're taking the position that we are an institution and we have responsibilities to make institutional kinds of links. We invite district superintendents to bring their principals to the Center to have their summer meetings. That immediately puts us in touch with a whole network of principals who can distribute our literature and who will welcome us to their schools. Principals still have a lot of effect on how we're received and where we can go in the school, so we're deliberate about that.

We also seek advice and input from district superintendents and from local consultants. We're putting together a workshop in late August targeted to a program mandated by the whole school system. It's called "Continuous Progress: Mastery Learning." We're trying to match up resources we have in the Center with various skills necessary in the continuous progress reading system. We've called upon board of education people to help design our workshop, so they can see that we're earnest about matching up to their objectives while using the kinds of resources that we have.

Katherine: *The final question is, looking back on all of this, what commonalities do the four teachers' centers have?*

Theresa: I guess the basic one is voluntary participation and the fact that we use a variety of people to do our inservice.

Edie: I think we honestly meet direct needs; we have rather different ways of assessing those needs, not relying only on formal assessments, but really trying to tune in to where people are by going into schools. I think all of us have expressed some connection with direct work with children and teachers in classrooms, as well as by teachers coming to the Center.

David: The commonality is really the focus on the teacher, saying that the teacher is central to the whole process of education. What a teacher does in the classroom—the way the teacher grows as a teacher—is the most important thing we can be about. We want to support that growth. We're not in the business of delivering something to teachers—we are helping a teacher choose and find resources for growth.

Judith: I think, too, we all have an ongoing availability. As opposed to the traditional inservice of scheduled events, in any given week people can come and individually meet their own needs. We probably all have rather informal environments, which I think support people—a place that they can identify with and where they can drop in, plus a place where people can look at classroom materials.

David: We all get feedback from teachers by asking them to bring in children's work, or examples of units they've done. We're very deliberate about wanting teachers to share with other teachers. We do try to make those kinds of connections. ■

A version of Conversation at Chautauqua will also be published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI). The report will appear in their *Innovation in In-service Education and Training of Teachers* series.

Remaking the Dream of the Independent Center

During the school year that followed the August 1977 conversation at Chautauqua the Teacher Curriculum Work Center (TCWC) lost its core subsidy from a local foundation and cut its three-person professional staff to one person supplemented with volunteer staffing. In March 1978 David Messerschmidt, of the Board of Directors, wrote Center members an overview of the Center's "beginnings, struggles, crises and hard work." The statement below is an excerpt from his letter to Center members first published in the TCWC bulletin, "News from the Center," March–April 1978.

TEACHER CURRICULUM WORK CENTER (TCWC)

"The Teacher Curriculum Work Center began as a fervent dream shared by five people. Their central concern was children. They felt that the most effective way to help children was to provide a place for the growth of teachers. There was an unspoken but real commitment to change in schools. They believed that real change would come only when individual teachers felt empowered to make decisions in their classrooms.

"In 1972, the Teacher Center became a haven for committed teachers. It offered them a workplace to share ideas with others whose primary concern was children. The Center became in some sense a classroom for adults. It modeled a set of values that seemed essential in any environment created for learning. There was an emphasis on responsibility and choice. Teachers were guided by the organization of materials. The staff provided for independent work in any area of the Center. There was a focus on inquiry—finding answers to personally meaningful questions. Items were displayed to pique the interests of teachers. Resource books offered the opportunity to add depth to the encounter with a particular curriculum material. Staff members encouraged talk about ideas.

"The Center also emphasized community. The tables and coffee brought teachers and others together to talk about their work with children. So the Center allowed a sort of back and forth between the earnest personal pursuit of some idea or material, and a public forum to present and test one's ideas. The forum might be a conversation at a table, or a more formal teacher-prepared workshop.

"In the very best sense the Center structured a range of possibilities for learning. It could accommodate almost any interest and any learning style. There was always a hesitation to be didactic and to lecture. The staff insisted on reflection. A thoughtful question was the likely response to a question demanding some final answer.

"Initial support came from a Wieboldt Foundation grant of $20,000. In 1976, several proposals later, the budget had swelled to $100,000. The most reputable foundations—Lilly, Field, Joyce,

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Now available: **Teachers' Centers Exchange Directory Supplement** (May 1978), a companion volume to the April 1977 **Teachers' Centers Exchange Directory.** The **Supplement** describes 55 additional teachers' centers not included in the earlier **Directory.** For order information, contact the Exchange.

New World, and Chicago Community Trust—supported the Teacher Center; it drew further support from contracts with school districts and universities.

"Very early, program officers in foundations began suggesting the need to look at the future. They urged the separation of board and staff functions so the Center might have a more conventional appearance when it sought funding. They encouraged the enlargement of the Board. Put simply, foundations urged the Center to see itself as a fledgling social service agency that had the luxury of start-up money. Their warnings were clear.

"The Center would at some point have to establish a fiscal operating base that was independent of corporate and foundation benefactors. The Center must either seek support from the people it serves directly, or market services to other public and private agencies.

"The people who started the Center, however, had mixed feelings on the question of institutionalizing an idea. Could something so personal and vital as a teacher center, focused on inquiry, community and personal meaning, serve those purposes if it became, for example, part of the public schools? Would the bureaucracy of a formal organizational structure squeeze the life from the organization?"

In the midst of these musings and the concomitant business-like reorganization of the Center's Board and management procedures, the last foundation promise of support was withdrawn, because of the foundation's decision to cease funding projects in elementary and secondary public education. Messerschmidt's overview continued with a summary of the efforts, unsuccessful so far, to procure even a minimal staff budget by means of individual and business contributions, memberships, workshop fees, benefits, and a bookstore. But he stated the Board's commitment to open the Center in fall 1978 with all-volunteer staffing if necessary.

Messerschmidt ended his overview by posing questions and choices for the Center's future that are common to almost all of the teachers' centers that began in the early 70's with foundation support and now must become self-sufficient, join a school district or college, or close.

"What are the purposes of the Teacher Curriculum Work Center *today*? What are the alternative futures? Should the Center restrict its facilities to members? Should non-members pay a users fee? What possible connections are there with Chicago Public Schools through District 14? We return quickly to—what should the Center do? How can it support itself?

"We are the inheritors of a dream realized as an institution. Our vision and hard work will determine how that dream is remade." ■

Programming the Center

Examples taken from the Advisory Center, Philadelphia, March 1977. Following are representative excerpts from the Center's bulletin, which announced and described upcoming workshops and group meetings. The complete schedule for the month was about twice this length.

ART TEACHERS — Thursday, March 3, 4:00–6:00

If you are an art teacher looking for support, you can join your peers the first Thursday of each month to share successful lessons. Bring a lesson to share.

INTRODUCTION TO CERAMICS AND POTTERY — Six Wednesdays: March 9, 16, 23, 30; April 13, 20, 3:30–5:30

This series will introduce teachers and parents to a variety of hand-building techniques with clay and to use of the potter's wheel. The techniques you will learn can be adapted for use with children. Rose Malley, experienced potter and teacher of ceramics, will conduct the series. Advance registration required.

COUNSELORS — Wednesday, March 9, 3:30–5:30

A group of counselors meets here the second Wednesday of each month to share ideas and hold workshops for professional growth. You can join them here March 9.

EACH OF US IS AN AUTHOR — Thursday, March 10, 4:00–6:30

We are all storytellers, fantasy builders, word manipulators. Every child and adult, with unique perceptions, experiences, daydreams and thoughts, is potentially an original creator with words—an author. The challenge is to unlock that potential in our pupils and also in ourselves. Letta Schatz, author of many books and stories for children, and a teacher of creative writing, will share ideas and techniques for stimulating expressive language and writing. You will participate in a sampling of creative language experiences, which can be adapted for almost any age. Dinner will be provided ($2 per person). Please call to register.

HAVE FUN DRUMMING — Wednesday, March 16, 3:30–5:30

Marirose Metz, music supervisor, and Grace Goss, music consultant, will introduce you to an exciting musical activity for children. Drumming activities develop the basic musical concepts of rhythm and form, and improve coordination skills. Come see how easy it is for you and your class to have fun drumming. Registration required.

SEXISM IN EDUCATION

A group is forming of people sensitive to the stereotyping of boys and girls, men and women. Participants will share lessons, activities and approaches that they have found helpful in countering sex-role stereotyping and will discuss relevant issues. If you are interested in joining, please call to learn the next meeting time.

PROVOCATIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS — Thursday, March 24, 4:00–8:00

Sam Cornish and Barbara Buchan, advisors from Education Development Center, Newton, Massachusetts, will present an overview of ways to use space—devised to provide interesting learning situations—to be shared through slides, samples of equipment, curriculum projects, and commentary. The content may serve as a springboard for further collaborations with workshop leaders and advisory staff to design and develop equipment or projects responsive to your situation. Call to register. Potluck supper. Bring a dish to share.

MATHTILES WORKSHOP — Wednesday, March 30, 3:30–5:30

$12 \times 17 = 204$ $207 \div 12 = 17\ R\ 3$ "I can see why it works!"

Do your students carry, borrow, multiply and divide without any ideas of why their answers are right? Come and discover how Mathtiles can help your students "see" operations with whole numbers, positive and negative numbers, and even algebraic expressions. This workshop is appropriate for elementary as well as secondary teachers. Mathtiles are available commercially or can be made in the Advisory Center shop. Steve Rasmussen, teacher at Vaux Junior High and co-developer of Mathtiles, will lead the session. Call to register.

PLANTING 2 — Thursday, March 31, 4:00–6:00

A chance for people who attended earlier planting sessios to solve problems, report successes and go further. Vivian Schatz, science advisor, will conduct the session. ■

Governance by Consensus

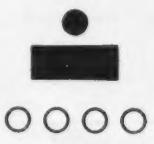
From Detroit Center for Professional Growth and Development, *Annual Report 1975–76, Part I: Activities and Future Directions*, pp. 3–4. This governing structure may be changed in 1979 in order to comply with state guidelines for staff development centers.

The Detroit Center for Professional Growth and Development has a five-member Governance Board composed of the dean of the College of Education, Wayne State University; the superintendent of the Detroit Public Schools; the superintendent of Wayne County Intermediate School District; the president of the Detroit Federation of Teachers; and the president of the (Detroit) Organization of School Administrators and Supervisors. The Governance Board sets policy and has final authority for the approval of all aspects of the Center's programs. Any one of the five members can veto a program if it is deemed to be ineffectual or inappropriate. A representative from the State Office of Education serves as an advisor to the Board. The multiple activities of the Center are coordinated by a director responsible to the Governance Board.

This model for governance is unique in the nation: five organizations with individual concerns have successfully joined hands in the common cause of improving the quality of education for Detroit's children.

To assure input from the broader Detroit and Michigan communities, a Center Advisory Committee has been established. Advisory Committee responsibilities are to: (1) identify prospective Center resources, (2) provide linkages and communications with organizations represented within the Committee, (3) serve as a sounding board for the Governance Board and director regarding programs and priorities, and (4) upon request, advise the director re: staffing, persons to serve on ad hoc committees, and securing additional funds.

Representatives from 24 institutions of higher learning and school-related organizations have accepted membership on this Committee.



In addition, four ad hoc committees have been constituted to assist the director and Governance Board with determining appropriate activities and functions for the Center. The committees are Mathematics, Reading, Evaluation, and Paraprofessional Ad Hoc Committees. Again, membership is broadly based so that input is received from a variety of organizations and institutions with recognizable interests in the achievement of Detroit students. ■

Quotations from Judith Schulz on

Free Enterprise in a Teachers' Center

Excerpts from a session on Survival as a Nonprofit Institution, St. Louis Workparty, June 1977, sponsored by the Teachers' Centers Exchange.

- Don't set an exact deadline for opening. Tell people your center is going to open sometime in the fall. Don't give a specific date, because you might not make it.

- Enlist the teachers' union. We convinced them to give us $1,000. It's good for them as well as you.

- Negotiate on rent. We rent a space that the man wanted $300 a month for, but I negotiated him down to $250. I checked every space available in the area; I knew square footage costs; I knew a

second floor was worth less; and I knew how long the place had been empty. Take somebody with you prepared to say, "Well, it's kind of small . . . I wonder if it keeps warm in winter . . . there's another space we're looking at. . . ." Then wait it out.

- Put together a list of what you need and give it to everyone! Go to stores, basements, offer to carry stuff away. I found a Xerox in somebody's basement. I don't like sitting on the floor all the time, and neither do 60-year-old teachers. Neither do business people I bring to talk about helping us out. But hold out. Go to a potential donor and say, "We really need chairs." Likewise, you don't always have to buy books you want for display. Write to the publishers and say, "Here's a map of the area we serve, with a potential of this many teachers and parents. Your exposure will be like an ongoing convention five days a week."

- Watch every cent. We put all our facility together for less than $100. You don't need money for tables, you don't need money for chairs or carpets or paper. Scrounge those things. If you've got money, you can use it for better things like staffing and rent.

- Inspire gifts. If everybody finds one thing for the teachers' center—a chair, a broken scissors to fix—the center belongs to more people. Ownership is really important—it's something you can't buy. You have to give people the opportunity to become part of the center.

- Get nonprofit status. It saves you on postage because you can mail at a cheaper rate; also people can make tax-deductible contributions.

- Get a federal property number. At federal property centers you can find film and great things like rubber stamp ink for 10 cents a bottle. We got a Thermofax machine that says "Do Not Reproduce Classified Material" for $10.

- Sell memberships. From May to September before we began the Center we sold $8 memberships (special charter rates) that would go up to $20 in the fall. It's free to use our Center but we encourage people to buy memberships. People don't have a perspective on funding, generally, and I think you need to help them understand

how the center is not entirely funded by the school district, government, or a philanthropist way up in a high building in a big city.

- People who walk into the Center are potential members, potential supporters. They want to give. People ask if they can help us, be on our staff. You've got to know that the person stand-

ing there wants to be sold a membership. We make it worth people's while—they get discounts on lamination, workshops, triwall, and four teaching posters a year for their classrooms.

- Have faith. We raise from month to month enough money to survive the next month, and usually to invest in something more, like mileage for the staff, or the laminator, which generates more money.

- Welcome community visitors. Laminating is $3 a meter; with a membership it's just $1 a meter. We've advertised the lamination to businesses—it gets people to come in and see what we're doing. They see teachers doing things on their own, and sometimes they give the Center a donation. We make a little money, promote good will, and still give people a good deal.

- Charge something for materials. Participants don't have to give you money, but people do need to invest something, maybe time. People (and myself included) tend to misuse things that are free; we often take more than we need. The Center sells our recycled materials. It might be only a penny apiece, but people make a better decision when they pay. You are doing something for them, not just for yourself, if they have to invest something. People spend three hours at our place and it costs 82 cents. They're overwhelmed, it's such a bargain.

- Charge for workshops. We charge $4.50 for most workshops; if you have a membership it's $2 off. It's smart if the money you pay people to conduct workshops comes out of what you take in at the workshops—perhaps a percentage. Never say, "I'm going to pay you $50." What if you don't take that much in?

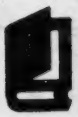
- Solicit donations from business and professional clubs. Impress business people with your track record—put on something terrific like a community learning fair, and get some coverage in the papers. Then say, "Look what we're capable of doing even without money."

- We've gotten donations from Jaycees, Jaycettes, Kiwanis. The American Association of University Women asked me to speak. I said, "There's no definite fee—what can you afford? We've gotten from $50 to $300." A businessman told me a good thing. He said, "When you talk to business people, they want to know how much you want. They know you're there asking for money. Don't waste their time. Briefly tell them what you're about and say, "We need your support—*x* amount of money or what you think you can give."

- I spoke to one group and didn't ask for a cent. Afterwards, I said to myself, "Why didn't I ask them for money? They liked the speech and admire the Center." You've got to say to yourself, "OK, I'm going to ask for $50. I'm going to say it." One time I asked somebody for $5,000; I was scared to death. But I think teachers are capable of doing good business. Ask a lot of questions; read a book on marketing.

  When I speak to a local group, I say, "The people we bring into the area have driven up to 30 minutes. They are going to buy gasoline at your gas station; they're going to buy groceries at the store on the way home; they ask me to recommend a restaurant." Talk about how their children can benefit because of the center. Assess the group and say, "I know a parent here has a kid in the third grade, and that kid loves red snowmobiles; but it's multiplication he's really having a hard time with. Come to Teacher Place and make some learning material or game about red snowmobiles to help your child with multiplication." Speak to who the group is—include more that they will be interested in, less time on non-interest areas. Show how the center can meet "their needs."

- Persuade business people to raise money for you. We're trying to get our advisory board to do this. I ask people who like our program to con-



tact potential funders and make an appointment for me. Then when I go see them, there's some validity. The third party introduction.

- Utilize volunteers and job training programs. We have 18 volunteers who help out—five people are pretty regular. We have a secretary part-time who doesn't cost us a cent through a WIN program; CETA workers are available too. You have to pick well, train well, and supervise.

- Make friends of strangers: say "please help." The Teacher Place is across from a park. I always have a carload of stuff to carry up, like 40 newspaper end-rolls. Teenagers are always in the park, so I go over and say, "Would you guys help me carry this stuff up?" Some older people were walking by one day, and I said, "Could you help me carry this gear up?" People are really glad to help.

- Don't wait for the timing to be perfect. When you have some people and resources, start your center. You have to *open* a center so that a person can come into it and experience it. A center is like a pineapple—you can't tell someone what it will taste like. You just have to say, "Here it is, taste it, try it out." ■

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FAR WEST LABORATORY · 1855 FOLSOM STREET · SAN FRANCISCO · CA · 94103

Teachers Centers Exchange